

Background Information Pertinent to the FBC & East Frederick Vision Plan

This information is provided by the consultant to provide extra background on issues; for your *understanding of and perspective on* the Form-Based Code for East Frederick. Articles in grey text are ones we think are tangential or of secondary importance – or may be deeper dives into the issues than most people will be interested in or have time for.

THE BLANDIFICATION OF AMERICA

WHY DOES EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE, LOOK THE SAME? – The loss of regional character in new buildings in America.

WHY DO ALL NEW APARTMENT BUILDINGS LOOK THE SAME?

There are dozens of articles like these two. They all say essentially the same thing but offer different reasons. I think this author is (and most of the other authors are) largely off the mark when assigning blame. This *Sameness/Blandification* is a real issue. Some of it is due to the industrialization of building materials and techniques, some architectural education – some of it is due to Building Codes (vs Zoning). A few of the **rules in the FBC are aimed directly at this issue.**

<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/business/article50548575.html>

<https://archive.curbed.com/2018/12/4/18125536/real-estate-modern-apartment-architecture>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-02-13/why-america-s-new-apartment-buildings-all-look-the-same#xj4y7vzkg>

STREETS, STREET TREES, AND STREET-SPACE

The New Rules of Urban Reforestation. By Patrick Alvord

Strips or blocks of uniformity should be scattered through the city to achieve spatial as well as biological diversity. Many cities think they need to put a tutti-frutti potpourri on every street, and this is simply not the case.

<https://planning.org/planning/2022/summer/the-new-rules-of-urban-reforestation/>

What Cities Need is Trees, Jeff Speck

The case for street trees in the City – and a better way to approach ecological diversity.

<https://citymonitor.ai/infrastructure/architecture-design/what-cities-need-shadows-and-trees>

THE DEVELOPMENT REGULATION/REVIEW SYSTEM – The convoluted and unproductive ‘system’ we have for getting things built in America. This gets to issues of housing affordability, and why it seems only deep-pocket corporations are building/developing. (The Form-Based Code is *part* of the solution.)

The Story Construction Tells About America’s Economy Is Disturbing. Ezra Klein, NYT Feb. 5, 2023

... many of the problems America faces — from decarbonization to affordable housing — would be a lot easier to solve if we were getting better at building, rather than worse.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/05/opinion/economy-construction-productivitymystery.html>

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ECONOMICS

The economic benefits of FBC. Smart Growth America/Form-Based Codes Institute study. *This study uses both quantitative analyses—trends in land values, tax revenues, rents, and demographics—as well as qualitative approaches—opinions of public and private stakeholders in the study areas—to assess whether form-based codes have a significant, positive impact on their communities’ economic performance.* (the report begins on page 5 – with introductory/FBC information before that)

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/zoned-in-economic-benefits-shared-prosperity-with-form-based-codes/>

PARKING REQUIREMENTS – The Faux Science

Parking. ITE Journal, February 2019
President’s Message. Rethinking Parking Minimums

<https://community.ite.org/blogs/mr-bruce-belmore-peng-ptoe-avs/2019/02/12/rethinking-parking-minimumsdf-on-the-COF-website>

Shoup to O’Toole: The Market for Parking Is Anything But Free – Streetsblog USA.pdf
A short-hand / ‘cliff notes’ approach to Don Shoup’s work. This is a *reply from UCLA professor Donald Shoup, author of the High Cost of Free Parking, to Randal O’Toole, the libertarian Cato Institute senior fellow--* countering an earlier letter-to-the-editor by O’Toole, that mis-stated Shoup’s positions. Nonetheless, it is clear and illuminating about what is wrong with the way we’ve been approaching government mandated parking minimums for the last 50+ years.

<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2010/09/01/shoup-to-otoole-the-market-for-parking-is-anything-but-free/>

Parking & the City. Book by Don Shoup
For anyone who is serious about understanding parking in an urban context, this is the seminal work.

Webinar Recap: Parking Reform in 21st Century Communities

This is a recap of the webinar Parking Reform in the 21st Century, from 2020.

<https://formbasedcodes.org/webinar-recap-parking-reform-21st-century-communities/>

Researchers warn traffic studies could face more legal scrutiny. By Chris McCahill, State Smart Transportation Initiative

Local governments often rely on traffic impact analyses to review and approve projects, charge impact fees, and ask developers to go above and beyond the basic requirements. These traffic studies, however, are often based on “junk science,” and may not hold up in courts much longer, according to a new [Viewpoint article](#) published in the Journal of the American Planning Association.

What When Cities Treated Cars as Dangerous Intruders. By Peter Norman

A reminder that the priority and dominance of automobiles over our streets is a relatively recent thing.